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# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

**Jiang Wu.** *Leaving for the Rising Sun: Chinese Zen Master Yinyuan and the Authenticity Crisis in Early Modern East Asia.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. xiv + 355 pp. \$36.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-19-939313-8.

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Religion develops in relation and in dialogue with the social and political order, and vice versa. However, too often the religious sphere and the public domain are treated separately, as independent rather than interdependent entities. In this volume, Jiang Wu provides a further confirmation that religion is interconnected with the social and political world in an active, and not merely passive, way. Moreover, the author demonstrates how in early modern China, as well as in the premodern and modern eras, such interdependence extended beyond the national borders and interests of the pan-East Asian region.

By using the case study of the Chinese monk Yinyuan Longqi (1592-1673), Jiang Wu proves that multidisciplinary and multiperspectival research on a Chinese Buddhist monk can actually unveil a net of (social and political) stories and histories. *Leaving for the Rising Sun* is then a monograph about the life and practice of the Chinese Buddhist monk Yinyuan, and is also, and especially, a volume that sheds light on the political and religious dimensions of premodern East Asia, that is, China, Japan, and Korea. Yinyuan lived in the Ming-Qing transition years, in China in the Southern Fujian and then in Japan during the early Tokugawa period, where he also had audience with the Tokugawa shogun Ietsuna. In this way Yinyuan, to use Jiang Wu's words, "became the first Chinese individual of religious and cultural significance to have such an honor after the founding of the Tokugawa regime" (p. 3). Yinyuan transmitted the Chan practice he was trained in to Japan, where it became an independent Chan Ōbaku school. And this Ōbaku school influenced many aspects of local Japanese culture. Yinyuan's Chan tradition bridged China and Japan, and in other respects

also separated the two countries and was thus strongly attacked in eighteenth-century Japan because of the rise of nativism. Given the nature of the topic, it is no surprise that Jiang Wu's research is based on Chinese sources and also new findings in archives and collections in Japan. The engagement between Chinese and Japanese sources is strong evidence of the crucial importance of multidisciplinary and cross-border research.

The book is organized into seven chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter provides a survey of Buddhism in the late Ming; these years are crucial because it is the time out of which grew so-called modern China. Jiang Wu writes of a revival or reinvention of Buddhism in the late sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth century. Buddhism and Buddhists in Ming China remain an understudied field, to which *Leaving for the Rising Sun* contributes greatly. Jiang Wu lists the most important scholarship on Ming Buddhism; other titles missing from the list are Beata Grant's monograph *Eminent Nuns: Women Chan Masters of Seventeenth-Century China* (2008), which shows that female nuns were also key players in the Chan sphere; and the more recent book by Beverly McGuire, *Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu* (2014). The "reinvention" of Buddhism during the Ming included a popularization of cults like the veneration of Guanyin, the mingling of popular religious practice and monastery activities, a standardization of monastic practices through compilation of monastic and liturgical manuals, the rise of a new gentrification of Buddhist clergy, and syncretism, or better, a synthesis of Chan, Pure Land, Vinaya, and esoteric traditions. This was also the time of the well-known "Four Eminent Monks," namely Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1655), Zibo Zhenke

(1543-1603), Yunqi Zhuhong (1535-1615), and Hanshan Deqing (1546-1623). At the same time, “textual Buddhism” was enhanced through the printing of several commentaries of important scriptures, private editions of the Jiaxing Canon, and the expanding of “textual communities.” Chan culture became revalued too in the textual and practical contexts and in what concerned “Dharma transmissions.” In this first chapter Jiang Wu also narrates and contextualizes Yinyuan’s life, education, and first practice of Buddhism within those Ming developments. Yinyuan became interested in Daoism and in Guanyin worship, passed through Confucian education, and finally immersed himself in learning and practicing Chan. His arrival at, and later running of, Huangbo monastery and study under Miyun Yuanwu (1565-1641) were crucial for Yinyuan’s final understanding and practice of Chan. It follows that Yinyuan was a monk of the late Ming, but his experiences also, I would add, resemble the life trajectories of other, even more recent Buddhist monks, as confirmation of the syncretic experiences that Buddhism and Buddhists in China represent.

The second chapter explores a second important stage in Yinyuan’s Buddhist formation and practice in connection with the historical development of the Huangbo monastery. The chapter starts with an overview of the history of Huangbo before the arrival of Yinyuan, and continues listing and analyzing the effects of his abbotship and efforts in turning it into a dharma transmission monastery. Here Jiang Wu gives an interesting digression on the classification of Buddhist temples into private, public, and dharma transmission monasteries that distinguished Chinese Buddhism in the late Ming, and even earlier since the end of the Song. Because of the dharma transmission, Huangbo monastery became subject to “regularly updating the genealogy of dharma transmission; regulating the naming practice of dharma heirs and disciples; issuing certificates and credentials of dharma transmission; and monopolizing the succession system of the abbacy” (p.65). The chapter ends with assessing how Huangbo monastery, and Yinyuan’s abbotship, faced all those challenges.

The following stage in Yinyuan’s life and practice concerns his migration to Japan and the establishment of the Ōbaku school of Zen Buddhism. Chapter 3 addresses the historical background of Yinyuan’s move to Japan within the overall context of the Ming-Qing historical and political transition, the role of Buddhism in those years, and how this overall situation is linked to—and affects in return—Sino-Japanese relations. Jiang Wu reports on the still unsolved debate of *why* Yinyuan moved to

Japan. Did he move in one of the several migration waves in response to the social and political turmoil that troubled Fujian in the Ming-Qing transition? Was Yinyuan a “Ming loyalist ... involved in political activities” (p. 90)? What was the relationship between Yinyuan and the military leader Zheng Chenggong? Did Yinyuan move because he was invited by Japanese rulers? Or did he go to Japan merely because, as a genuine Chan monk, he was motivated to spread Buddhism in Japan, where Buddhism was understood to have been corrupted? In other words, were there Buddhist or political reasons behind Yinyuan’s migration? And what impact did his move have on Buddhism and social politics in China and Japan? To what extent did the support to Chinese Buddhist migrants in the Nagasaki community also aim to counterattack Christianity in Japan? Jiang Wu discusses all these possibilities on the basis of archival documents and correspondence. The migration of Chinese monks to Japan in the late Ming is just another instance of the monastic travels that have concerned East Asia since the Tang period—see for instance Marcus Bingenheimer’s *A Biographical Dictionary of the Japanese Student-Monks of the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries: Their Travels to China and their Role in the Transmission of Buddhism* (2001). Similar travels and monastic networks have involved modern (late Qing and Republican periods) East Asia as well.

Chapter 4 explores the founding of the Chinese-style Manpukuji in Kyoto (1661) and the establishment of the Chinese-style Ōbaku school and its relation to the Tokugawa *bakufu* and Tokugawa foreign policy. This chapter then considers the emerging nationalistic discourse in Japan and the shift of authority to a Japan-centered rather than a China-centered world.

The fifth chapter turns attention back to Yinyuan and analyzes a few dimensions of this eclectic Chinese Chan monk. Jiang Wu explores again, but this time in more detail, Yinyuan’s syncretic Chan practice, and thus questions whether he can be defined as an authentic (and thus authoritative) Chan/Zen monk. Yinyuan was eclectic not just in his understanding of Chan, but in this life overall: besides a Dharma practitioner, Yinyuan was a literary man, a writer of poems, and also a renowned thaumaturge and Daoist diviner. Again, Yinyuan incarnates key features of eminent monks in premodern and modern China. Some of the traits of Yinyuan, and the succession of abbots in Manpukuji, led Japanese to question whether Yinyuan and those Chinese monks were really an embodiment of “authenticity,” a topic that is developed in the last two chapters and then again in the conclusion of the

book.

*Leaving for the Rising Sun* unpacks a new understanding of (Buddhist) Sino-Japanese relations, and the interconnectedness of the social and political orders with the religious sphere. Jiang Wu analyzes Sino-Japanese political relations through the study of Sino-Japanese Buddhist relations, as a further confirmation that religion is socially embedded and that society and politics are religiously defined. This monograph addresses important (and interlocked) concepts such as authenticity and authority, the related phenomenon of sectarianism, the (different) relevance of Sinocentrism in the transition from premodern (Tang and Song) to the early modern (Ming/Tokugawa) East Asia, and the crisis that affected several sectors in China and Japan in the seventeenth and

early eighteenth centuries. Why was Yinyuan a symbol of religious, cultural, and political authenticity? What was the role of China in the new balance of East Asia in the post-Ming period? “Crisis” is another key term in *Leaving for the Rising Sun*. Jiang Wu writes about an “authenticity crisis” and the “seventeenth-century crisis,” and stresses that religion and the religious are both active participants in this process. Finally, this monograph adds solid research on the historical development of Dharma transmission and lineage construction in late Ming Chan and Chinese Buddhism overall. *Leaving for the Rising Sun* will serve as a solid reference book for graduate students and scholars in the fields of religion and history of East Asia, especially those interested in Chinese religion and society during the Ming dynasty, Chan/Zen history, and Sino-Japanese Buddhist and political relations.

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